



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <https://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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FCC ANNOUNCES AND SOLICITS NOMINATIONS FOR WORKING GROUPS OF THE TASK FORCE FOR REVIEWING THE CONNECTIVITY AND TECHNOLOGY NEEDS OF PRECISION AGRICULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

GN Docket No. 19-329

On June 17, 2019, the Federal Communications Commission announced the formation of a new federal advisory committee, the Task Force for Reviewing the Connectivity and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United States, that will perform duties and submit reports consistent with the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018.¹ Today, the Commission announces four working groups for the Precision Ag Connectivity Task Force and solicits nominations for membership on these working groups.

The four working groups are: (1) Mapping and Analyzing Connectivity on Agricultural Lands, (2) Examining Current and Future Connectivity Demand for Precision Agriculture, (3) Encouraging Adoption of Precision Agriculture and Availability of High-Quality Jobs on Connected Farms, and (4) Accelerating Broadband Deployment on Unserved Agricultural Lands. These working groups will assist the Task Force in performing its duties pursuant to the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018.

Nominations for membership on these four working groups should be submitted to the FCC no later than December 3, 2019. Nominees for membership on the Precision Ag Connectivity Task Force need not reapply. We will consider these existing nominees for membership on each of the four working groups. However, existing nominees may email PrecisionAgTF@fcc.gov to request consideration for a specific working group or, conversely, to request not to be considered for a specific working group.

We also welcome new nominations for individuals who wish to serve on the working groups, and procedures for submitting nominations are set forth below. The Task Force is organized under, and operates in accordance with, the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).²

The Mapping and Analyzing Connectivity on Agricultural Lands Working Group will develop recommendations that will allow the Task Force to measure and analyze connectivity on agricultural lands, including specifically developing recommendations that will allow the Task Force to:

- Identify and measure current gaps in the availability of broadband Internet access service on agricultural lands;

¹ *FCC Announces the Establishment of the Task Force for Reviewing Connectivity and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United States and Seeks Nominations for Membership*, Public Notice, 34 FCC Rcd 5057, 5057 (WCB/WTB 2019). The Task Force, which will be established upon approval by the General Services Administration, will perform duties and will submit reports consistent with sections 12511(b)(3)(A) and (b)(5) of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, Pub. L. 115-334, 132 Stat 4490. *Id.*

² Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. 2.

- Recommend specific steps that the Commission should take to obtain reliable and standardized data measurements of the availability of broadband Internet access service as may be necessary to target funding support, from future programs of the Commission dedicated to the deployment of broadband Internet access service, to unserved agricultural lands in need of broadband Internet access service;
- Recommend specific steps that the Commission should consider to ensure that the expertise of the Secretary and available farm data are reflected in future programs of the Commission dedicated to the infrastructure deployment of broadband Internet access service and to direct available funding to unserved agricultural lands where needed; and
- Prepare a report on an annual basis that details the status of fixed and mobile broadband Internet access service coverage of agricultural lands and the steps being taken to accurately measure the availability of broadband Internet access service on agricultural lands and the limitations of current, as of the date of the report, measurement processes.

The Examining Current and Future Connectivity Demand for Precision Agriculture Working Group will develop recommendations that will allow the Task Force to weigh and prioritize connectivity needs of agricultural operations, farmers, and ranchers throughout its work, including specifically developing recommendations that will allow the Task Force to:

- Prepare a report on an annual basis that details the projected future connectivity needs of agricultural operations, farmers, and ranchers.

The Encouraging Adoption of Precision Agriculture and Availability of High-Quality Jobs on Connected Farms Working Group will develop recommendations that will allow the Task Force to encourage adoption of broadband and precision agriculture on farms and ranches and thereby address labor supply challenges and promote the availability of high-quality job opportunities, including specifically developing recommendations that will allow the Task Force to:

- Promote effective policy and regulatory solutions that encourage the adoption of broadband Internet access service on farms and ranches and promote precision agriculture.

The Accelerating Broadband Deployment on Unserved Agricultural Lands Working Group will develop recommendations that will allow the Task Force to weigh policies and rules to accelerate broadband deployment on unserved agricultural lands, including specifically developing recommendations that will allow the Task Force to:

- Develop policy recommendations to promote the rapid, expanded deployment of broadband Internet access service on unserved agricultural lands, with a goal of achieving reliable capabilities on 95 percent of agricultural lands in the United States by 2025;
- Recommend specific new rules or amendments to existing rules of the Commission that the Commission should issue to achieve the goals and purposes of the policy recommendations described in the bullet above; and
- Recommend specific steps that the Commission should consider to ensure that the expertise of the Secretary and available farm data are reflected in future programs of the Commission dedicated to the infrastructure deployment of broadband Internet access service and to direct available funding to unserved agricultural lands where needed.

WHO MAY APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP

The Commission seeks applications from:

- agricultural producers representing diverse geographic regions and farm sizes, including owners and operators of farms of less than 100 acres;
- agricultural producers representing tribal agriculture;

- Internet service providers, including regional or rural fixed and mobile broadband Internet access service providers and telecommunications infrastructure providers;
- representatives from the electric cooperative industry;
- representatives from the satellite industry;
- representatives from precision agriculture equipment manufacturers, including drone manufacturers, manufacturers of autonomous agricultural machinery, and manufacturers of farming robotics technologies;
- representatives from State and local governments;
- representatives with relevant expertise in broadband network data collection, geospatial analysis, and coverage mapping; and
- qualified representatives of other stakeholders and interested parties with experience on these issues whose participation would further the diversity and balance of this working group.

Working group members will be selected to achieve balance in the expertise and viewpoints that are necessary to address effectively the issues to be considered by the working groups. Working group members nominated by specific entities or organizations to serve on these working groups will be appointed as representatives of the entities or organizations that have nominated them. As appropriate, working group members may also be appointed for their individual expertise as “special Government employees” as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 202(a). Because working group members seeking to serve in their individual capacities as special Government employees due to their individual expertise may not be registered federal lobbyists, any such nominees who are registered federal lobbyists will not be considered for appointment on the working group.

OBLIGATIONS OF WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Working group members will serve at the discretion of the Chairman of the Commission. Working group members must be willing to commit to serving on a working group for two years from the establishment date of the Task Force. The time commitment for participation on these working groups will be substantial. However, the meetings will be conducted informally, using suitable technology to facilitate the meetings, subject to oversight by the Designated Federal Officer of the Task Force.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE, DEADLINE AND MEMBER APPOINTMENTS

All nominations should be received by the Commission as soon as possible, but no later than December 3, 2019.

No specific nomination form is required; however, each nomination must include the following information:

- Name, title, and organization of the nominee and a description of the organization, sector or other interest the nominee will represent;
- Nominee’s mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number;
- A statement summarizing the nominee’s qualifications and reasons why the nominee should be appointed to the working group;
- A statement, if the nominee will represent a specific organization, describing the organization as well as the benefit of having the organization represented on the working group; and
- A statement confirming that the nominee, if seeking appointment for the individual’s expertise and not as a representative of an organization or entity, is not a registered federal lobbyist.

For applicants seeking to represent an organization or company, the applicant’s nomination to the working group must be confirmed by an authorized person (*e.g.*, organization or company official) that

such organization or company wants the nominated person to represent it on the working group. For example, this confirmation may be in the following format: “I am [insert official’s name], the [insert official’s title] at the [insert name of organization - *e.g.*, company, government entity, trade association, *etc.*], with responsibilities for [concise description of position]. My organization would like [insert proposed member’s name], who is currently [an employee of/consultant/attorney to the company] to serve as our representative on the Commission’s [insert working group] of the Precision Ag Connectivity Task Force

Please note this *Public Notice* is not intended to be the exclusive method by which the Commission will solicit nominations to identify qualified candidates; however, all candidates for membership on the working group will be subject to the same evaluation criteria.

All nominations, including the requisite statements listed above, should be submitted by e-mail to PrecisionAgTF@fcc.gov.

ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202-418-0530 (voice), 202-418-0432 (TTY).

For additional information about the Task Force, please contact Jesse Jachman, Designated Federal Officer of the Task Force, at (202)418-2668, or Jesse.Jachman@fcc.gov; Erin Boone, Deputy Designated Federal Officer, at (202)418-0736, or Erin.Boone@fcc.gov; or Celia Lewis, Deputy Designated Federal Officer, at (202)418-7456, or Celia.Lewis@fcc.gov.

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